

A NEW OBAMA-RAHM LEAK POLICY?

Maybe it's the addition of beltway leaker extraordinaire, Rahm Emanuel, to the team, but it appears that the Obama team may have adopted a new policy on leaks, departing from their eerily disciplined no-leak approach during the campaign.

Note this passage in NYT's coverage of Obama's request that Bush support a bailout for the auto industry.

The struggling auto industry was thrust into the middle of a political standoff between the White House and Democrats on Monday as President-elect Barack Obama urged President Bush in a meeting at the White House to support immediate emergency aid.

Mr. Bush indicated at the meeting that he might support some aid and a broader economic stimulus package if Mr. Obama and Congressional Democrats dropped their opposition to a free-trade agreement with Colombia, a measure for which Mr. Bush has long fought, **people familiar with the discussion said**. [my emphasis]

Here's how the WaPo reported the same detail.

Bush, speaking privately to Obama during their first Oval Office meeting, repeated his administration's stand that he might support quick action on those bills if Democratic leaders drop their opposition to a Colombia trade agreement that Bush supports, **according to people familiar with the discussions**. [my emphasis]

And here's how Bush's team reported Bush's ire about these leaks to Drudge.

Just hours after President Bush and President-elect Obama met in the Oval Office of the White House, details of their confidential conversation began leaking out to the press, igniting anger from the president, sources claim.

"Senator Obama would be wise to keep close counsel," a top Bush source warned.

[snip]

Bush advisers view the leaks as an effort to undermine the president's remaining days in office.

"Senator Obama may not be familiar with a long-standing tradition of presidents holding their private conversations, private," a senior adviser explained to the DRUDGE REPORT. [my emphasis]

Seeing as how this obviously organized leak may well have come from the latest addition to the previously leak-proof Obama team—Rahm Emanuel—the Bushies aren't really in a position to lecture about what past Presidents have done. Rahm's been there, and was leaking in the Clinton days as well, I'm sure. (One other candidate to be the leaker is another Clinton veteran, John Podesta, though my money's on Rahm.)

So my question has more to do with the efficacy of the leak. Will Bush be more amenable to an auto bailout now that everyone knows he tried to hold American workers hostage to the fate of Bush's union-busting buddy in Colombia, Alvaro Uribe?